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ABSTRACT

The investigation tested the mean overall grade level placement of senior students in Louisiana secondary schools for the 1973-74 school session to see if they could meet the same standard that was used for adult students as the prerequisite for General Educational Development (GED) testing for the high school equivalency diploma (that is a minimum score of 13.0 with no one area below 12.0 on the California Achievement Test). The State was divided into eight geographical regions, and from a randomly selected parish in each region a randomly selected secondary school was chosen. All senior students (a total of 423) in each of these selected schools were administered the California Achievement Test, Advanced Battery, during the final month of the senior year. The individual overall grade placement of each student was determined, along with the grade placement for each subtest. The mean overall placement level was determined for the sample, and the mean scores for the subtests were determined and are presented in table form. The research indicated that the adult student who is approved for GED testing in Louisiana demonstrates an academic performance several grade levels above the mean grade level placement of sample secondary diploma candidates. (JR)

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Bulletin No. 1267

A STUDY OF THE ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL CRITERIA FOR NONVETERAN ADULT STUDENTS' ELIGIBILITY FOR TAKING THE TEST OF GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LOUISIANA

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

At the national level, there has been a growing need for programs which provide appropriate educational opportunities for adults. The national need for adult education was recognized in 1965 with the establishment of the Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) under Title II, Part B, of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1965; and the following year, the Adult Basic Education Program (ABE) became part of Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Programs with passage of the Adult Education Act of 1966 by the United States Congress. The ABE program provided funds for the establishment of an educational program offering adults, 18* years of age and over with less than elementary level of education, the opportunity to complete the eighth grade level of achievement.[1]

The need for adult education in the State of Louisiana was acknowledged as early as 1928 when a special session of

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[1] Rules and Regulations For The Adult Education Act of 1966, Title III, P.L. 89-850, (Washington, D.C.: Federal Register, Volume 32, number 77), pp. 6277-6278.

* Ibid. When the Adult Basic Education Program was moved from the OEO program with the passage of the Adult Education Act of 1966, the age limit for enrollment into the basic program was dropped from 18 to 16 years of age and above.

the legislature with the emphasis given by the administration of Govenor Huey P. Long, passed a tax law and dedicated the receipts therefrom for use in programs designed to combat adult education deficiencies.[2]

However, it was not until 1950 when the Louisiana Legislature passed Act 252, that formal adult education programs became available to nonveterans in Louisiana.[3] The Act 252 Adult Education Program enrolled 193,944 non-veteran adults and 37,425 became high school graduates from 1950 through June 30, 1972.[4] By 1972, every local parish system in Louisiana offered adult education classes in the Act 252 High School Program.[5] During the 1969-70 school year,

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[2]E. D. Schumacher, The Struggle Against Functional Illiteracy in Louisiana (Sulphur, Louisiana: Maplewood Books, 1973), p. 42.

[3]Acts of the State of Louisiana-Regular Session, 1950 (Baton Rouge: Thos. J. Moran's Sons, Inc.), pp. 435-436.

[4]Annual Program Statistics-Act 252 Adult Education Program, 1950-1972, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Department of Education, 1973), p. 1.

[5]Annual Evaluation Reports-Adult Basic Education Program, 1965-1972, compiled (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Department of Education, 1973), pp. 1-14.

9,867 Louisiana adults enrolled in the Act 252 Adult Education Program. However, only 3,952 were able to complete requirements and obtain diplomas.[6] While part of the reason was given as insufficient funds[7] other factors may have been operating.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the major problems for Adult Education Programs has been in the area of retention of students since the programs are entirely voluntary. Extensive studies of ABE programs have indicated that most students drop out because they become discouraged quickly.[8]

The adult student who enrolls in classes in order to receive his high school equivalency diploma in Louisiana must meet several requirements as follows:

1. Enrollment in adult education classes and satisfactory completion of the Tests of General Educational Development

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[6] "Did You Know?", THE LAPSAE LEADER, Volume 1, No. 2, February 1, 1970.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Don F. Seaman, "Starting Students Successfully in Adult Basic Education," Research Information Processing Center Monograph (Tallahassee, Florida: Florida State University, 1971), p. 71.

shall determine the eligibility of a nonveteran adult to receive a high school equivalency diploma.

a. Before a nonveteran can be administered the Tests of General Educational Development, he must present himself to local school officials for the purpose of being administered a standardized achievement test at the high school level. A minimum score of 13.0 with no one area below 12.0 must be attained by the individual before he can be recommended to take the Tests of General Educational Development.

b. In each instance the Parish or City Superintendent of schools shall certify to the State Director of Secondary Education that the adult has complied with the adult education requirements. Such certification will be in the form of a request that the adult be administered the Tests of General Educational Development. This request is made by the local school superintendent to the Director of Secondary Education.

c. In no instance may a nonveteran under the age of 19* be graduated from the Adult Education Program; however, married persons under the age 19* will be eligible to enroll in adult classes.

d. In order to participate in the adult education program and be awarded a high school equivalency diploma, an adult must be a legal resident of Louisiana.[9]

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*Revised (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Department of Education, July 31, 1969). Section I, subsection C, page 178 of Bulletin No. 741, Handbook for School Administrators, is changed to read: "To be eligible to participate in the Adult Education program (1) an Adult Basic Education student must be 16 years of age or older, (2) an Adult Education student in the high school phase of the Act 252 program must be 18 years of age or older. To be awarded a high school equivalency diploma, a person must be 18 years of age or older except that married persons under the age of 18 may be enrolled in the high school phase of the program. Upon successful completion of Adult Education and the test of General Educational Development, a married person under the age of 18 may be awarded a high school equivalency diploma but local systems may defer the awarding of the high school equivalency diploma until the earliest time the person could have graduated if he had continued in a regular high school program."

[9]Handbook for School Administrators-Bulletin No. 741, Revised (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Department of Education, 1966), p. 178.

The requirements are not uniform throughout all states. In fact, the minimum achievement level for eligibility for the Test of General Educational Development (GED) ranges from 10.0 to 13.0 in states which compose Region VI of the United States Office of Education Adult Basic Education Regions. The states in Region VI are Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, New Mexico and Louisiana. The highest achievement requirement for GED testing in Region VI states is held by Louisiana.

Research supports the fact that the adult student becomes quickly discouraged and is prone to drop out of programs. In view of such evidence, serious consideration should be given to the expectation level for GED testing held by the state of Louisiana. Perhaps such an achievement level as a prerequisite for GED testing discourages the adult student from continuing and taking the GED test. Perhaps a more realistic standard, when compared to those of other states, would give encouragement to the adult student to complete the high school equivalency requirements.

This study is designed to determine whether or not the 13.0 overall achievement level with no score below 12.0 on a high school level achievement test is an appropriate

criterion for screening adult students seeking to take the GED Test.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated for the study.

Is the achievement level expectation as a prerequisite for GED Testing realistic when compared to the achievement level of seniors in Louisiana secondary schools? Is it reasonable to assume that seniors in Louisiana secondary schools can meet the same standard as that used for adult students as prerequisite for GED Testing?

Purposes and Hypothesis

The investigation was designed to determine if the mean overall grade level placement of senior students in Louisiana secondary schools for the 1973-74 school session is 13.0, with no score below 12.0, on the California Achievement Test. The following hypothesis was tested.

> The mean grade level of sample senior students in Louisiana secondary schools for the 1973-74 school session is 13.0, with no score below 12.0 on the California Achievement Test.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The following plan was employed in conducting the research.

Selection of the Sample

The state was divided into eight geographical regions for purposes of securing the sample. (See Appendix for map.) The parishes in each region were listed and one from each region was randomly selected for participation. A listing of all secondary schools in the selected parish was made and one school was randomly selected for each parish.[10] The participating schools represented a large urban school, small rural schools, and small consolidated schools. (See Appendix for listings of participating parishes.)

The parish supervisors of adult education in the randomly selected parishes were sent letters soliciting cooperation in testing the senior students in the previously identified schools. (See Appendix for copy of the letter.) All of the selected parishes participated in the study. A total of 423 senior students was used in the sample.

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[10] Louisiana School Directory, Bulletin No. 1219, Session 1972-1973.

Collection of Data

After the school sample had been selected, testing materials were sent to the parish supervisors of adult education for testing senior level students during the final month of the senior year.

Administration of Test

The senior students were administered the California Achievement Test, Advanced Battery, at a time mutually agreeable with the building principal and the test administrator. Care was taken that the place of testing be comfortable and free from distractions. The testing was done by the parish supervisor of adult education or his designee.

The California Achievement Test Battery was chosen for administration because it is in most frequent use for testing adult students for GED eligibility.

Presentation of Data

The individual overall grade placement was determined for each student, along with the grade placement for each subtest. The mean overall grade placement level was determined for the sample, and the mean scores for the sub-tests were determined.

As given in Table I, the mean grade placement on the total achievement battery for the sample was 9.6. The grade placement range was from 6.0 to 15.4.

On the three subtests of the battery, it was found that the mean grade placement in language was 10.2, with a range of 6.0 to 15.5, as indicated in Table II. The mean grade placement on the mathematics subtest was 8.1, with a range of 6.0 to 15.8. On the reading subtest, the mean grade placement was 10.3, with a range of 6.0 to 15.6.

Table III indicates the raw scores and grade placement ranges on the language subtest. On the mechanics category the grade placement mean was 10.0 with a range of 6.0 to 15.3. On the spelling category, the grade placements ranged from 0.0 to 16.0, with a mean of 10.0.

The data from the reading subtest was presented in categories as given in Table IV. The vocabulary section ranged from 6.0 to 15.4 in the grade placement, while comprehension grade placement ranged from 6.0 to 15.9.

Data from the separate categories on the mathematics subtest is presented in Table V. The range in grade placement in the reasoning section was 6.0 to 15.8 with a mean of 8.1. On fundamentals the range was from 0.0 to 16.0 with a mean of 7.3.

TABLE I

OVERALL GRADE PLACEMENT

Total Battery	
Mean Score	243
Mean Grade Placement	9.6
Grade Placement Range	6.0 to 15.4

TABLE 11

GRADE PLACEMENTS BY SUBTESTS

	Language	Mathematics	Reading
Mean GP	10.2	8.1	10.3
Range	6.0 - 15.8	6.0 - 15.5	6.0 - 15.6

TABLE III

RAW SCORES AND GRADE PLACEMENTS FOR CATEGORIES ON LANGUAGE SUBTEST

	Low Score	GP	High Score	GP	Mean Score	GP
Mechanics	11	6.0	135	15.3	94	10.1
Spelling	0	0	27	16.0	27	10.0
Composite	11	6.0	162	15.5	106	10.2

TABLE IV

RAW SCORES AND GRADE PLACEMENTS FOR CATEGORIES ON READING SUBTESTS

	Low Score	GP	High Score	GP	Mean Score	GP
Vocabulary	4	6.0	55	15.4	29	10.5
Comprehension	9	6.0	83	15.9	38	9.5
Composite	14	6.0	137	15.6	68	10.3

TABLE V

RAW SCORES AND GRADE PLACEMENTS FOR CATEGORIES ON MATHEMATICS SUBTESTS

	Low Score	GP	High Score	GP	Mean Score	GP
Reasoning	9	6.0	58	16.3	32	8.9
Fundamentals	0	0	80	16.4	37	7.3
Composite	12	6.0	138	15.8	69	8.1

It should be noted that the norms for the battery do not give a grade placement score below 6.0. Therefore, an individual scoring at least one correct answer on any category of any subtest will automatically be assigned a grade placement of 6.0.

Analysis of Data

An analysis of the data revealed that the mean grade placement on the total Battery of the California Achievement Test of the sample was 9.6. The mean grade placement on the subtests was (1) on language 10.2, (2) on mathematics 8.1, and (3) on reading 10.3.

Table VI indicates the performance of the sample in relation to the 13.0 criterion for overall score and the 12.0 criterion for score on each subtest for eligibility for GED Testing. Analysis of the data indicates that the sample did not meet the criteria for GED Testing in any category. The hypothesis that the mean grade placement of sample senior students in Louisiana secondary schools for the 1973-74 school session is 13.0, with no score below 12.0 on the California Achievement Test, was rejected. The mean grade placement of senior students was below 13.0 as shown in Table VI, and the mean scores on all subtests were below 12.0.

TABLE VI

COMPARISON OF SENIOR STUDENTS' MEAN ACHIEVEMENT TO CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR GED TESTING

Subtest	Minimum GED Criteria	Mean Score	Difference	Mean Difference
Total Battery	13.0	9.6	3.4	
Language	12.0	10.2	1.8	
Mathematics	12.0	8.1	3.9	
Reading	12.0	10.3	1.7	
Mean Subtest	12.0	2.466		2.466

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research indicated that sample senior level students in Louisiana secondary schools were not achieving as indicated by achievement test scores, at the same level expected of adult students as prerequisite to GED Testing in Louisiana. The data supported that the adult student who is approved for GED Testing in Louisiana demonstrates an academic performance several grade levels above the mean grade level placement of sample secondary diploma-candidates.

Considering the research findings, it is apparent that the standards for eligibility for GED Testing are comparatively high. Because of this, it is suggested that the criteria for GED Testing be reviewed from two viewpoints: (1) as a possible deterrent to adult students who frequently view the criteria as unattainable, (2) as a possible voucher to the academic excellence of the GED graduate. The research failed to substantiate the commonly held opinion that a GED diploma is substandard to a regular high school diploma and should serve to foster the respectability of the GED diploma.

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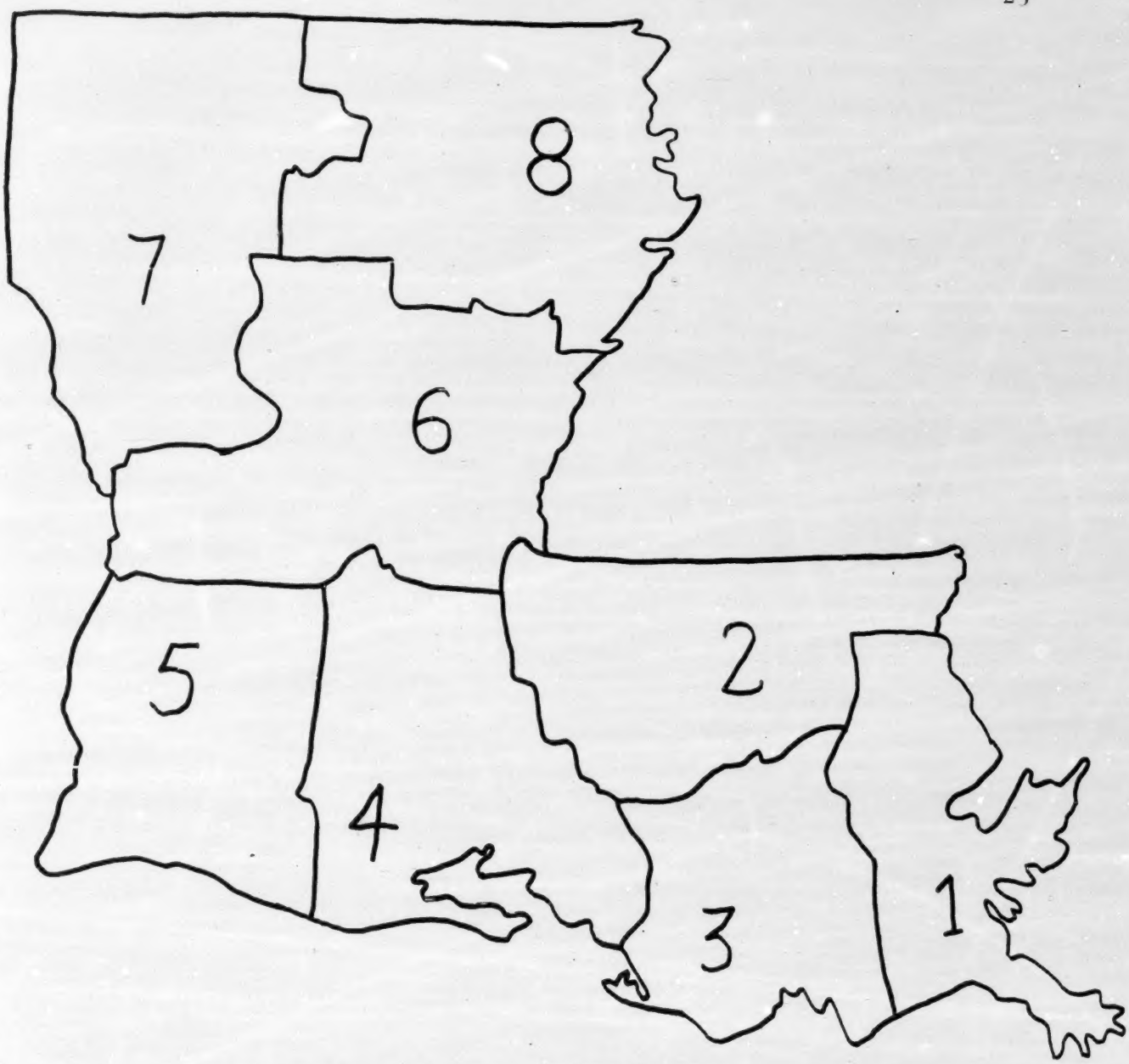
APPENDIX



This map is the eight geographical divisions used in sampling of senior students.

PARTICIPATING PARISHES

Region 1:	Orleans
Region 2:	East Baton Rouge
Region 3:	St. Charles
Region 4:	Lafayette
Region 5:	Beauregard
Region 6:	Avoyelles
Region 7:	Bienville
Region 8:	Morehouse

October 25, 1973

Dear Educator:

We are currently engaged in a research project designed to secure data relative to the requirements for adult students to become eligible for General Educational Development Testing.

The State of Louisiana now requires the adult student to earn 13.0 on an achievement test, with no score below 12.0, in order to be eligible to take the GED test. The research team is collecting data which might help determine the appropriateness of such a criterion.

Achievement test scores of graduating seniors in Louisiana must be secured so that comparisons of those scores might be made with the scores required of the adult student.

The research team requests your help in securing the achievement test scores of at least thirty graduating seniors in your parish. Please indicate your commitment by checking the appropriate block on the enclosed sheet and returning it at your earliest convenience.

Please be informed that all data will be held in confidence and that no schools will be identified in reporting the research.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Loy D. Hedgepeth, Director
Northeast La. Learning Center

Sam V. Dauzat, Assoc. Professor
Louisiana Tech University

JoAnn Dauzat, Asst. Professor
Grambling College

☐ I have discussed this with my superintendent and he is willing to allow the evaluations with at least thirty seniors in the parish. Also, I will be willing to help with the evaluation.

☐ Sorry, but after having discussed this matter with the Superintendent we find it impossible to be able to assist you in this project.

_____
Name

_____
Parish